



# 24<sup>th</sup> Navajo Nation Council

## Office of the Speaker

### FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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### MEDIA CONTACT

Carl Slater, Director of Communications and Government Affairs  
Bronson Peshlakai, Sr. Public Information Officer  
(928) 871-6815  
nnlb.communications@gmail.com

## Council Considers Support Bills, Advances Executive Confirmations



The Naabik'iyáti' Committee convened March 15 where 10 executive appointee confirmations and two other legislations were considered in the Navajo Nation Council Chamber in Window Rock, Ariz.

**WINDOW ROCK, Ariz** — The 24th Navajo Nation Council Naabik'iyáti' Committee convened Thursday to consider executive appointments, two legislations, and gave consideration to adding a resolution to the agenda supporting Navajo Transitional Energy Company's independent acquisition of Navajo Generating Station and Kayenta Mine.

A motion to introduce Legislation 0044-19, the legislation backing NTEC's independent acquisition of the mine and plant sponsored by Delegate Rickie Nez (Nenahnezad, Newcomb, San Juan, T'iis Tsoh Sikaad, Tse'Daa'Kaan, Upper Fruitland), was considered but didn't receive enough support to add the item to the agenda, which was filled with 10 executive branch appointment legislations.

"I will support it if we add [the legislation] on the end of the agenda," said Kee Allen Begay, Jr. (Low Mountain, Many Farms, Nazlini, Blue Gap/Tachee, Tselani/Cottonwood). "Last time we deleted all the confirmation hearings and added it to this day."

During the agenda discussion, several delegates requested more town halls on the acquisition issue.

An amendment to add the legislation to the agenda failed by a 13-7 vote. In response to Delegate Begay, the Office of the Speaker organized two town hall forums beginning next week to gain more feedback from citizens and stakeholders about NTEC acquiring NGS and Kayenta Mine from Salt River Project, Peabody, respectively.

On Monday, March 18 from 5 to 8 p.m., a forum will be held at Tselani/Cottonwood Chapter. The following day on Tuesday, March 19 from 5 to 8 p.m., a town hall meeting is scheduled at the Phil Thomas Performing Arts Center located at State Route 504, Shiprock, N.M.

"We all know this is a controversial and sensitive issue. We should consider Hózhó," said Delegate Elmer Begay (Dilkon, Greasewood Springs, Indian Wells, Teesto, Whitecone). "I met with community members living in the affected area; we need to listen to the people."

The bill was introduced on March 7 and was on a five-day hold for public comment. The bill received a large number of supportive and opposing comments from constituents. After the five-day hold, the Resources and Development Committee considered the bill and gave it a unanimous consent with a "Do Pass" recommendation at its committee meeting Wednesday.

In other committee action, 10 executive appointees, whose confirmations were considered by the Naabik'íyáti' Committee, passed step two in the process. The following appointees received committee approval and will be considered for final confirmation at the next Navajo Nation Council meeting: Legislation 0009-19, confirming Dr. Rudy Shebala as Division of Natural Resources executive director received a 19-0 vote; Legislation 0011-19, confirming Garrett Silversmith as Division of Transportation division director received a 19-0 vote; Legislation 0012-19, confirming Dr. Pearl Yellowman as Division of Community Development director received an 18-0 vote; Legislation 0013-19, confirming Jesse Delmar as Division of Public Safety executive director received a 17-1 vote; Legislation 0018-19, confirming Lomardo Aseret as executive director of the Division of General Services received an 18-0 vote; Legislation 0022-19, confirming JT J. Willie as Division of Economic Development executive director received a 17-0 vote.

Legislation 0025-19, confirming Dr. Jill Jim as health director of the Dept. of Health received a 16-0 vote; Legislation 0026-19, confirming Dr. Perphelia Fowler as executive of the Division of Human Resources received a 16-0 vote; Legislation 0027-19, confirming Christopher Becenti as executive director of Navajo Nation Telecommunications Regulatory Commission received a 16-0 vote; and Legislation 0040-19, confirming Santee Lewis as Navajo Nation Washington Office director received a 15-0 vote.

Legislation 0023-19, an action requesting FirstNet and AT&T, in developing a nationwide public safety broadband network to recognize and accept nation-to-nation relations, requesting an assessment and strategic plan from Navajo Nation Public Safety and Telecommunications programs, was referred back to the Health, Education and Human Services Committee for

further consideration by a 15-1 vote. And, Legislation 0038-19, an action supporting New Mexico Senate Bill 407 entitled, "An act relating to higher education; allowing tribal colleges to receive funds from the lottery tuition fund," received unanimous approval.

Unless a Special Session of the Council convenes, the next appointment confirmation legislations will be considered at the Council's Spring Session on April 15.

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